

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

June 30th, 2020

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday June 30th, 2020 at 7:02pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Shirley Canniff, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, and associate member, Sarah Carrier were present. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also in attendance.

Anticipated Speakers: Ali Carter & Danielle Desilets

Members of the Public: Lucia Milite, Ben Wall, Diane Schilder, Farhat Jilalbhooy, Henry Fenollosa, Jackie Maurer, Karen Barbarisi, Kristen McKenzie, Megan Uy, Melissa White, Nailah Randall-Bellinger, Suzanne Schwartz, Vince Piraino, Brooke Fox, Erik Konda, Nicole Siegel, Andrew Bengtson, Audrey Raboin, Joshua Buckholtz, Sarah Susskind, Jennifer Raitt, & Lauren Farenga.

Preliminary Matter: Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

Open Forum – Public Comment

Ms. Mayer asked if anyone in attendance had public comment to share. N/A

Use of Parks for Profit Activities During State of Emergency Proposal – Ali Carter

Ms. Mayer indicated that with such high interest in the topic this item would be taken up out of order and introduced Mr. Connelly to the numerous individuals attending the meeting with interest in the use of parks for profit businesses in Town during the state of emergency. Mr. Connelly thanked everyone for the feedback received over the last two weeks and stated he wanted to clarify the Commission's stance on the topic following their previous meeting, as he believes there was some confusion. Correspondence was received from several individuals, who believed that a decision had been made and that the Commission was not in support. This was not the case, as no decision was made during the Commission's previous meeting with parties being asked to return with a specific proposal and questions answered.

The Town of Arlington's Economic Development Coordinator, Ali Carter, gave a presentation that started by highlighting the potential impact a Temporary Park Licensing program could have on local businesses. This would allow businesses to utilize specific outdoor Town-owned space through November 1st to offer programs/events. The hope is that having access to outdoor space will help customers feel more comfortable and help businesses as they recover from COVID-19's impacts.

Ms. Carter stated that the Arlington Economic Recovery Task Force conducted an *Arlington Consumer Survey*, which indicated that local consumers are supportive of Arlington's businesses reopening. Out of 1,400 responses received, they determined that individuals are looking for the following during the reopening process: (a) Masks required (b) Proper social distancing protocols in place (c) Low contact/outdoor options.

Ms. Carter reviewed the proposal for *Town of Arlington Temporary Outdoor Fitness and Arts in Parks Rules & Regulation*. In order to have approved access to Town properties, businesses would need to adhere to the following:

- Businesses are required to fill out a specific *Business in Parks Field Use Request Permit* form
- Arlington Recreation Director will then review all applications, assign space, and create schedules
- Businesses must secure and submit a copy of their Liability Insurance, naming the Town of Arlington. All businesses are also required to sign a *Waiver, Release of All Claims, and Hold Harmless Agreement: COVID-19 Pilot For Outdoor Fitness, Arts, and Other Business Activities on Park & Recreation Property*.
- The Park and Recreation Commission will reconvene in (8) weeks to review the program.

Commissioners have received and been asked to review the documents regarding the proposed use of outdoor space for-profit. Before voting, Commissioners were provided the opportunity to share their feedback with Ms. Mayer stating that the information outline in these documents could be amended prior to approval and/or in the future.

Ms. Rothenberg reiterated that this is something that Commissioners would like support and believes that many of the questions and potential issues brought up in the previous meeting have been clarified. Ms. Rothenberg asked Mr. Connelly to present the specific locations that would be used, if the proposal is approved. Mr. Connelly stated that the following locations were selected as they are located in different sections of Town, offer a variety of topography options, and are spaces that would have a limited impact on other uses. The proposed locations are as follows:

- McClennen Park (area south of the baseball field)
- Hurd Field Parking Lot
- Water Tower Grass Area
- Mill Pond Park
- Robbins Memorial Garden at Town Hall
- Spy Pond Tennis Courts Adjacent Grass Area
- Magnolia Basketball Court
- Reservoir Beach (Once Phase 1 Project is completed)

Ms. Rothenberg expressed concern about amplification, which Mr. Connelly addressed by stating that amplification could be allowed, if consistent with the Commission's current policies. Mr. Connelly stated that if amplification is requested by a business, it must be noted on the request form and will need to be approved by the Director and Commission.

Mr. Connelly stated that if this plan is approved, requests by businesses will be not reviewed on a first come, first served basis initially. Interested businesses will have until July 6th, to submit their initial park space requests. This will allow initial requests to be reviewed and access to be approved in a fair and equal manner. Applications after this date would then be reviewed on a rolling basis. Ms. Rothenberg noted that she wanted to make an amendment to the timeline for evaluation of the process from the current (8) weeks proposed to (4) weeks. She reiterated that if approved access to space is given evenly to fitness, art, and recreation business.

Mr. Walker agrees with Ms. Rothenberg that the (4) week review date would be preferred over (8) weeks and stated a question regarding the time limit on usage. The request form currently states that the time frame for usage is until 9:00pm, but the Commission's Park Policy states that locations are open until dusk. Mr. Walker is looking for consistency.

Ms. Carrier asked if Reservoir Beach would be open to other users at the same time it was being used by businesses. Mr. Connelly stated that the Reservoir will be open to members of the public for passive recreation use during the same times as business usage but no swimming activities will occur as the beach is closed. Access will be allowed to the public and businesses as soon as Phase 1 Reservoir Project work is completed (TBD). Ms. Carrier asked if the Recreation Department is currently accepting/approving general event and field requests submitted by members of the public. Mr. Connelly stated that the only requests being reviewed at this time are those submitted on the behalf of organized sports groups. Ms. Carrier followed up by stating that she has concerns that if event/party/picnic table requests are not being reviewed currently but business and organizations requests are, this may not sit well with the public. She also asked if there would be a fee associated with businesses using park space. Mr. Mayer confirmed any Town fees would be waived for businesses to use the space, as the goal behind this temporary use is to help them recover from the financial impacts of COVID-19. Ms. Carrier believes that Memorial Garden is a special place in Town that she would like see removed as a selected location. Mr. Connelly stated that this location was selected at the request of the Town Manager's Office. It was also noted that business fees charged for participating in a class, registration, etc. are required to be paid and collected in advanced. The transfer of money is not allowed on Town property.

Ms. Mayer asked that Whittemore Park be added as a location that was previously discussed. Based on Commissioner feedback, amendments will be made to the procedures and policies for this process including to usage times, highlighting a carry in-carry out policy, the Commission review date, etc.

Ms. Canniff made the motion to approve temporarily allowing businesses to host for-profit activities (outdoor fitness & arts) on Town Park property during the State of Emergency until November 1st, 2020, as amended and outlined in the documents listed above. Ms. Rothenberg seconded this motion. Vote passed by roll call of Commission Members, 5-0.

Mr. Connelly will make the appropriate updates and will get final policy/documents to Ms. Carter to distribute. Mr. Connelly will also work with the Town's Public Information Officer, Joan Roman, to get this information posted and out to the public. Commissioners thanked various individuals for their efforts, including Ms. Carter, Mr. Connelly, Arlington Recreation, Arlington Economic Recovery Task Force, Arlington Board of Health, and all businesses/representatives involved.

Reservoir Phase II Construction Schedule Update -KZLA

Mr. Connelly stated that following their last meeting, the Commission had concerns regarding the timeline and schedule for the Reservoir Phase II project. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Lasker met with KZLA representative, Danielle Desilets, who was on the Zoom call to give Commission Members an update on timeline and details for the project.

Ms. Desilets shared that the community engagement process has begun. KZLA placed (10) signs around the Reservoir property that have specific individual questions, which all can be found on the survey. The public survey was posted on Friday, June 26th and will be open until July 24th. In just (4) days' time, the survey has already been completed (700) times, showing how important the property is to the Arlington community.

As the Commission had previous concerns with the budget, KZLA is moving forward with a schematic pricing set, which will help determine the best price options.

Ms. Desilets stated that the design development phase will begin this week. KZLA recently had a staff member onsite to map all invasive species and quantify erosion. This process will occur for the next (6) weeks and will include price estimates & sketches for the beach & parking lot areas.

KZLA will host (2) public meetings for Phase 2. The goal is to hold the first meeting on July 28th, prior to the Park & Recreation Commission Meeting. KZLA will present cost estimates and results from the public survey. The Commission is creating a Playground sub-group, which KZLA would like established asap so feedback can be provided during upcoming meetings (July 13th & TBA).

Ms. Desilets shared that as soon as the design development drawing has been completed, KZLA would be looking to go to the local Conservation Commissions. Mr. Connelly stated that he's contacted the Conservation Commissions for both Arlington and Lexington. There seems to be interest in coordinating this process between them and filing items at the same time. This would allow the wording of the Order of Conditions to be the same, reduce the amount of meetings needed, shorten the permitting time, and create consistency for the contractor.

Ms. Desilets continued by discussing breaking construction into (2) separate packages with the pump house roof and concession stand renovation bundled together as (1) to save time and money. Ms. Desilets believes the pavilion can be implemented in the later construction package, as it will have less environmental impact/construction issues. The goal would be for package (1) to go out to bid in October, with work beginning in November, and being completed by April. In parallel, KZLA would be working on the second package, which has the larger scale of site work including the walking loop around the Reservoir.

KZLA understands Commission/Town's concerns that they cannot lose another beach season in 2021, as the facility is closed this summer. Their goal would be to stage construction allowing work on the beach and parking areas to

be completed first to allow the Town to operate the beach in 2021. Other Phase 2 project work, like that on the perimeter of the Reservoir, can continue through the spring/summer and into the fall (like planting).

Ms. Mayer thanked Ms. Desilets for KZLA's response, creativity, and approach for taking the Town's concerns with the timeline into consideration. Ms. Rothenberg is looking forward to seeing the community's feedback from the public survey. Mr. Walker appreciates the schedule changes and optimism of working on phases concurrently, with priority being on finishing the beach. Mr. Lasker believes the project timeline is much improved and asked Ms. Desilets to share pricing with Commission when available. Mr. Lasker also suggested that KZLA contact the Town's Building Inspector and Purchasing Department to gather their feedback on permitting/determining a builder. Mr. Lasker believes that phasing the site work should be a last case scenario, since it could lead to possible complications & price increases.

Mr. Lasker also suggested possibly adding a pickleball court at the beach, since there is increased interest in pickleball and would add to the recreational opportunities. Ms. Mayer believes that with the Master Plan having a volleyball court and relocating the playground, this may be something to look into at this time. Questions include if there is a feasible location and if the cost could fit in the budget or if other funding options are available. Mr. Connelly also likes this idea and believes if courts were added they would be very popular. Ms. Rothenberg likes this idea, as it could potentially bring in a different group of users, and Mr. Vaillette suggested that the space could possibly be used for outdoor ice skating during the winter months.

Correspondence Received: Elizabeth Foughty (Business in Parks), Betsy Leondar-Wright (Spy Fun Day), Emily Sullivan (Tree and Vegetation Clearing), Rob Davis (Crusher Lot), Henry Fenollosa (Crusher Lot)

Ms. Mayer stated that a request was received on behalf of the Friends of Spy Pond Park, regarding Spy Pond Fun Day that is traditionally held each year. Due to the current situation, the group is inquiring about the potential of holding alternative activities in 2020 and what that request process will look like. Mr. Connelly stated that they would still need to go through an approval process like all other groups that submit requests. Additional information on the potential activities/event is needed in order to provide more feedback for the group.

Ms. Mayer spoke on a communication received from the Arlington Conservation Commission about the clear cutting of trees that occurred on Town property near Wellington Park. Ms. Canniff questioned if there was more information on this and why it occurred. It is believed that this was a decision made by an abutting private land owner and that the cutting was not approved by the Town. Mr. Connelly stated that the Arlington Conservation Committee is aware that the cutting took place and that they are looking into the matter, as restoration will likely be required.

Ms. Mayer shared that there is interest from community members regarding the installation of formally approved mountain biking trails in Crusher Lot. The department was contacted by Rob Davis and Henry Fenollosa regarding this matter. Ms. Mayer stated Adam Glick had previously discussed this possibility with the Commission. Mr. Connelly followed up by stating that the Recreation Department has received feedback from both sides on this topic (in favor and against) and believes that there needs to be a formalized process and decision regarding this. Mr. Connelly recently met with Henry Fenollosa and his father onsite to discuss this possibility and requested that Henry Fenollosa create a proposal to present to the Commission to formally begin the process. Mr. Fenollosa is planning to present to the Commission during their July 14th meeting. Michael Ratner is currently a steward of Crusher lot and will be invited to this meeting. Mr. Fenollosa thanked the Commission for allowing him the opportunity to present on this and is interested in also becoming a steward of the property. The Commission looks forward to his proposal.

Capital Project Updates – Joe Connelly

- *Lussiano Playground*

Mr. Connelly stated he is in communication with the contractor for the project and anticipates that equipment for the playground will be delivered Monday of next week with work beginning to mobilize on Tuesday.

- *Reservoir Phase II & Pilot Path Project*

Mr. Connelly stated the Town and contractor are still waiting for Verizon to grant permission for pole access so that it can be utilized for electrical installation. Jim Feeney has been taking the lead on this.

Mr. Connelly met with representatives of Lexington and Arlington Conservation Commissions about the pilot path project. Lexington ConComm has concerns with the proposed current location (near the playground) and asked for a new design proposal closer to the beach, which Mr. Connelly is working on with KZLA. The estimated cost of the project is still very reasonable and the location will afford easier access for installation than the first proposed location for the path, which was closer to the farm land.

Mr. Connelly stated that he was contacted regarding the installation of public art work on the cement filter structures located within the swimming area at Reservoir Beach. The Commission stated that while this idea had been mentioned briefly in the past, there was no decision made regarding the plan to move forward with public art installations at the Reservoir. Potential designs created by a local artist will be forwarded Commissioners. Ms. Mayer believes that more conversation needs to occur about the process, as no decision was made on this. While installations of public art have been implemented in the past at locations like at Spy Pond, the Commission has questions regarding the selection and approval process. Since no commitment was previously made about this, Mr. Connelly suggested that it be placed on hold to first identify if this is something desired and if so, what the selection process should be. He also noted that the Reservoir Beach will be closed during the summer of 2020.

- *Rink ADA Improvements*

The ADA improvements at the Ed Burns Arena are coming along. Work that has been completed thus far includes the addition of a handicap ramp at the main entrance, installation of an automatic door system, and the installation of the lowered ticket counter window.

- *Rink Refrigeration*

The refrigeration project at the Ed Burns Arena with American Refrigerator Company will begin soon with a meeting scheduled on Thursday to develop a schedule for the project. Recreation is still looking for additional funding for a new snow melt pit to be built. Mr. Connelly is waiting to hear back from the Town regarding the possible transfer of unused funding from the Poet's Corner project.

Creation of Playground Task Group

a) Assess current status of playgrounds

b) Determine in-house short term repairs/upgrades

c) Prioritize recommendations for capital projects

d) Develop a plan for on-going playground maintenance/inspections

Ms. Mayer spoke on the current plan to create a Playground Task Group, which follows up on the work identified by the Nancy White Playground Study. With the new fiscal year starting on July 1st, the Commission and Recreation need to determine which playground capital projects will be the priority. This task group will also need to define a plan for maintenance, determine quick fix items and what will need to be contracted out. Mr. Connelly stated that there are several locations that have maintenance issues, which will continue without proper attention. Former Interim Recreation Director, Robert Jefferson, was able to begin assessing these maintenance issues with the DPW in early spring. Mr. Connelly shared that he has received a request for funding work on the Parmenter Playground.

The Commission believes that Arlington DPW must be involved with this process and that a staff member should also be part of the group. This will allow for discussions to determine realistic options for type/amount of work which DPW staff members can be responsible for moving forward.

Mr. Connelly suggested the need for a dedicated staff member in Town for playgrounds, who would ideally know all playground codes and requirements, review inspection reports, properly determine how to move forward with maintenance issues based on urgency, and would make suggestions regarding capital projects. Proper

maintenance will have a positive impact financially in the long-term. Mr. Connelly believes it is important to have a representative from the Capital Planning Committee involved with the Playground Task Group, as well. Mr. Connelly shared he is planning on the Department's Program Supervisor, Zach Vaillette, becoming a Certified Playground Inspector.

It was determined that (2) Commissioners will serve on the Playground Task Group, as well as (2) each on the Reservoir Beach Playground sub-group and the Mountain Biking Evaluation Group that are planned. Commission Members have been asked to send their preferences for serving to Mr. Connelly by next Tuesday.

Approval of Minutes – June 16, 2020

Ms. Mayer brought up approval of meeting minutes for the Commission's Meeting on June 16th. It was suggested and agreed upon to make the following amendments:

- Page 1: Replace "East Avenue" with Eastern Avenue - Incorrect information
- Page 2: Replaced "Mitch Meyerson" with Mitch Ryerson - Incorrect spelling
- Page 3: Removed "Elise Caira and Jackie Maurer of Upbeat Cycling have a location in Arlington, in addition to their (4) other locations." - Uncertain information

Ms. Canniff made the motion to approve the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes for June 16th pending these changes. Mr. Walker seconded this motion. Ms. Mayer asked for a roll call vote, approving the minutes (5-0).

Comments and Items For Future Meetings

- *Field Block Scheduling – July 28, 2020*
- *Mountain Biking in Crusher Lot – July 14, 2020*

Mr. Walker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:44pm. This motion was seconded by Ms. Canniff. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.